



- \* Lock your car and roll up the windows before you leave it and after you enter it.
- \* Have your keys ready when you approach your car. Practice getting into and out of your car without delay.
- \* Check the back seat every time you enter a car - someone could easily be hiding behind the seat.
- \* Arrange to ride with someone when leaving a party, or going anywhere without your car.
- \* Stay alert on buses, noticing what's happening around you or where you are may save you from a potential rape situation.
- \* If you have car trouble, raise the hood, lock yourself in, and wait for the police. If a man stops and offers help, do not get out of your car; ask him to call a service truck for you.
- \* Do not stop to offer help to a stranded motorist, that is a common scheme used by would-be assailants. Stop at the next phone booth and call the police or highway patrol.
- \* When parking, select a place that will be lighted when you return. Check for loiterers before exiting the car.
- \* Have your garage well lighted when you return home. Keep your headlights on until the garage door is opened, so that you will have additional light.
- \* Do not drive alone or on trips in a car that is low on gas or in poor repair.
- \* When giving your car keys to a parking lot attendant or service person, give them only the ignition key. Keep your house keys with you to prevent someone from duplicating them and entering your home uninvited.
- \* If you suspect that someone is following you, drive to the nearest public place (gas station, all-night restaurant, etc.) and honk your horn to attract attention.
- \* If someone tries to break in, use your horn and make as much noise as possible - SCREAM!
- \* Don't walk or jog alone on dark streets. If possible, use busy and well lighted streets.
- \* Try not to wear restrictive clothing - high-heeled shoes, long tight skirts or anything else that could prevent you from a possible escape - if you are planning on walking somewhere alone.
- \* Don't accept rides from strangers, especially ones that change their direction to give you a lift.
- \* Plan your route in advance, staying away from alleys, dark doorways, parking lots, backyards, or tall shrubbery. Walk near the curb if possible. Avoid high crime areas of town or any situation which may make you vulnerable.
- \* Have your keys ready when you approach your home and enter immediately.
- \* Carry a whistle, other noisemaker or a flashlight. Rapists hate loud noises or anything that attracts attention.
- \* If you are followed, change direction and head for businesses that are open, theaters, restaurants, stores, etc.
- \* Carry your purse snugly under your arm to make it more difficult for anyone to grab.
- \* If you are going to carry a "weapon" such as car keys, an umbrella, books or similar items, have them in your hand ready to use. Be SURE you know how to use it, and keep it available. Keep in mind that a WEAPON CAN BE TAKEN AWAY AND USED AGAINST YOU.
- \* Be cautious and alert when entering elevators, hallways, stairways, and rooms where someone may be lurking. Stand near the control panel when in an elevator. You can then ring the alarm or stop the elevator at any time if necessary.

## AVOID

It's not fair, but it's a fact - children and women must avoid some situations in order to reduce the risks of sexual assault.

Learn to be observant so that you will be able to describe a criminal should you witness or be a victim of a crime. Practice this by describing people you pass on the street, or identifying car makes and models.

Don't be afraid to be afraid, trust your senses. If a situation makes you feel uncomfortable, it may be dangerous, so take action to remove yourself from the situation. Learn to be aware of the people around you and their actions so you don't become vulnerable to an attack.

You have the *right to be rude*. You have the *right* to complain and possibly hurt someone's feelings if you suspect they may be trying to take advantage of you. Don't let unscrupulous people prey on your desire to remain polite - and teach your children about their "*right to be rude*", too.

## FLEE

If you know, or even suspect, that you are about to be assaulted, flee if you can! If you can flee, do so at the earliest possible moment. If there are people within hearing distance, scream and make as much noise as possible to discourage your attacker from pursuing you.

## CONFRONT

If a sexual assault is imminent, you have no choice but to confront your assailant. You may fight or submit. Remember that this decision must be based on your safety and opportunities. No one else can make this decision for you.

If your choice is to submit, do so without guilt, knowing tht you may be saving your life. The crime will still be rape, and your attacker is still just as guilty of a crime as he would be if you fought back. If you decide to fight, **FIGHT TO HURT**, and do so without any feelings of guilt or hesitation. Overcome your natural reluctance to hurt someone.

## ONLY YOU CAN DECIDE . . .

Only you can decide what course of action to take, because only you can judge the situation. Only you know what your capabilities are and what the consequences mean to you. This again, is one of your *rights* as a person. Because you don't have the chance to refuse to be raped, you have the *right* to choose whether to fight or to submit, and feel no guilt about your choice later.

## PREPARE

Be prepared physically and mentally for a possible attack. If possible, take a self-defense class and keep in shape by continually practicing it. Think about what alternatives are open to you in a rape situation. Practice dealing with these situations by putting yourself into roles that you see on television, read in newspapers or magazines. For example, "What would I do if that were happening to me?" When walking or driving use the same method to train your mind to think fast when the situation actually arrives.

If you are actually raped, there are still things you can do to help yourself.

- Try to keep a "cool head".
- Notice everything you can about the rapist; his speech, hair, clothes, any scars, the direction he takes when leaving, etc.
- Try to determine his height in comparison to yours or possibly a nearby door.
- If you are raped someplace other than your home (a car, strange apartment, etc.) remember everything you can about the setting. Try to leave your fingerprints everywhere you can. Try to leave some small personal item such as a button, earring, lipstick - anything which can be traced to you.
- Immediately call the police and be willing to prosecute.
- Preserve all physical evidence carefully. Do not bathe or wash any clothing, do not touch any object handled by your attacker or you may destroy valuable evidence.

# SEEK HELP

Do NOT BLAME YOURSELF. Do NOT DISPAIR IF YOU FIND YOURSELF FRIGHTENED OR UPSET FOR SOME TIME AFTERWARD. **SEEK HELP FROM A LOCAL RAPE CRISIS CENTER AND THOSE PERSONS WHO CARE ABOUT YOU.**

## PROSECUTE

When the suspect is arrested, you will have to cooperate in the prosecution and testify in open court. A lawyer trying to defend the accused rapist will explore every possible means to help his client, and he will attempt to discredit your testimony. Stand Firm! Only your testimony can convict the rapist. Remember - a large number of rapists are repeat offenders and your cooperation in court could prevent someone being a victim of another attack. Social attitudes tend to discourage women from testifying. However, most women care enough about themselves and the town they live in to realize this is the only way we can reduce the chances of another woman being raped.

## PREVENTION

Personal safety is your responsibility. YOU can help protect yourself by following five rules:

1. Remember that the best defense against any crime is prevention. Secure your home, car and personal life against intrusion by an assailant.
2. Be aware of the possibility of an attack and behave accordingly. Avoid places and situations which make you an easy target.
3. Use common sense and good judgment in your day-to-day activities; never be overconfident about your safety.
4. Beware of strangers and any out-of-the ordinary occurrences.
5. Immediately report all suspicious or criminal activities to the police.

# RAPE Rape RAPE



*...is a  
four letter  
word*

# CRIME PREVENTION

Rape is a violent crime; an invasion; a frightening experience. Rape affects all women no matter what their age, race or economic status. There is no absolute protection from rape, but there are precautions women should take to lessen the likelihood of being attacked. If women increase their awareness of rape prevention tactics, they decrease the opportunity for rapists to commit this brutal offense.

## FACTS

- \* Men do not rape out of sexual desire, but rather to control and humiliate another person.
- \* Rapists are not necessarily "dirty old men". Over half of them are under 25 and three out of five are married and leading normal sex lives. A vast number of victims know their rapists before the incident.
- \* Rape is one of the fastest growing crimes in the country and the most seriously underreported (as many as ten rapes occur for every one reported.)
- \* Forcible rapes reported result in convictions in only a fraction of the cases. Suspects are arrested in only 5% of all rapes, less than 3% are convicted.
- \* Over 70% of all rapes are planned. They don't all happen in a dark alley, either. Half of all rapes occur in the victim's home!
- \* Rape is not a sexual act . . . it is an act of anger and power. The rapist acts out his hostility by taking control of the victim and abusing and degrading her (or him) in the most personal way possible.
- \* Any woman can be raped anywhere - anytime!

# SECURITY

- \* Women who live alone should list only their last names and initials in phone directories and on mailboxes.
- \* The best lock cannot function if you fail to lock it. Be sure you keep your doors locked during the day, even if you are at home or leave for only a few minutes. Use a peephole viewer in order to see who is outside your door, keeping the door locked. Chains offer no protection!
- \* Inside and outside lights give you a good deal of protection. Leave lights on at night, even when away from home. Change location of the lights from time to time.
- \* Leave outside door lights on when you plan on returning home after dark. Have your keys ready so the door can be opened quickly.
- \* When a stranger asks to use your phone do not permit him to enter. Offer to summon emergency assistance or make the call for him. Never give personal information to strangers.
- \* Vary your routine a little each day - most rapes are planned!
- \* Trim bushes and shrubbery close to doors or windows so no one can hide in or behind them.
- \* Get to know your neighbors. You may need them in an emergency.
- \* If you suspect you are being watched, pretend to talk to someone in a back room. It may prevent someone from knowing exactly how many people are home.
- \* Ask your local law enforcement agency for a home security check, and follow it up.